

Example 2. Prestamped metal lead frames for semiconductor devices exported in multiple unit strips in which the individual frame units are connected to each other, or integrated circuit wafers containing individual integrated circuit dice which have been scribed or scored in the United States, are regarded as fabricated components. The separation of the individual frames by cutting, or the segmentation of the wafer into individual dice by flexing and breaking along scribed or scored lines, is regarded as an operation incidental to the assembly process.

Example 3. Wires of various type, electrical conductors, metal foils, insulating tapes, ribbons, findings used in dressmaking, and similar products, which are in a finished state when exported from the United States, and are ready for use in the assembly of the imported article, are regarded as fabricated components if they are only cut to length or subjected to operations incidental to the assembly process while abroad.

Example 4. Uncut textile fabrics exported in bolts from which wearing apparel components will be cut according to a pattern are not regarded as fabricated components. Similarly, other materials, such as lumber, leather, sheet metal, plastic sheeting, exported in basic shapes and forms to be fabricated into components for assembly, are not eligible for treatment as fabricated components.

(b) *Substantial transformation of foreign-made articles or materials.* Foreign-made articles or materials may become products of the United States if they undergo a process of manufacture in the United States which results in their substantial transformation. Substantial transformation occurs when, as a result of manufacturing processes, a new and different article emerges, having a distinctive name, character, or use, which is different from that originally possessed by the article or material before being subject to the manufacturing process. The mere finishing or modification of a partially or nearly complete foreign product in the United States will not result in the substantial transformation of such product and it remains the product of a foreign country.

Example 1. A cast metal housing for a valve is made in the United States from imported copper ingots, the product of a foreign country. The housing is a product of the United States because the manufacturing operations performed in the United States to produce the housing resulted in a substantial transformation of the foreign copper ingots.

Example 2. An integrated circuit device is assembled in a foreign country and imported into the United States where its leads are formed by bending them to a specified angle. It is then tested and marked. The imported article does not become a product of the United States because the operations performed in the United States do not result in a substantial transformation of the foreign integrated circuit device.

Example 3. A circuit board assembly for a computer is assembled in the United States by soldering American-made and foreign-made components onto an American-made printed circuit board. The finished circuit board assembly has a distinct electronic function and is ready for incorporation into the computer. The foreign-made components have undergone a substantial transformation by becoming permanent parts of the circuit board assembly. The circuit board assembly, including all of its parts is regarded as a fabricated component, the product of the United States, for purposes of subheading 9802.00.80, HTSUS (19 U.S.C. 1202).

[T.D. 75-230, 40 FR 43022, Sept. 18, 1975, as amended by T.D. 89-1, 53 FR 51247, Dec. 21, 1988]

§ 10.15 Fabricated components not subject to the exemption.

Fabricated components which are not products of the United States are excluded from the exemption. In addition, the exemption is not applicable to any component exported from the Customs territory of the United States:

(a) From continuous Customs custody with remission, abatement, or refund of duty;

(b) With benefit of drawback;

(c) To comply with any law of the United States or regulation of any Federal agency requiring exportation; or

(d) After manufacture or production in the United States under subheading 9813.00.05, HTSUS (19 U.S.C. 1202).

Example. Partially completed components of an electric motor are imported in several separate shipments and are entered under a temporary importation bond to be manufactured into finished motors under the provisions of subheading 9813.00.05, HTSUS (19 U.S.C. 1202). The components are completed and assembled into finished electric motors. The finished motors are exported and are assembled abroad into electric fans which are subsequently imported into the United States. Irrespective of the fact that the assembly of the motors might involve such a substantial change that the motor could be considered a product of the United States, no exemption may be given for the value of the

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electric motors, since they were exported after manufacture or production in the United States under the provision of sub-heading 9813.00.05, HTSUS (19 U.S.C. 1202).

[T.D. 75-230, 40 FR 43023, Sept. 18, 1975, as amended by T.D. 89-1, 53 FR 51247, Dec. 21, 1988]

§ 10.16 Assembly abroad.

(a) *Assembly operations.* The assembly operations performed abroad may consist of any method used to join or fit together solid components, such as welding, soldering, riveting, force fitting, gluing, laminating, sewing, or the use of fasteners, and may be preceded, accompanied, or followed by operations incidental to the assembly as illustrated in paragraph (b) of this section. The mixing or combining of liquids, gases, chemicals, food ingredients, and amorphous solids with each other or with solid components is not regarded as an assembly.

Example 1. A television yoke is assembled abroad from American-made magnet wire. In the foreign assembly plant the wire is despoiled and wound into a coil, the wire cut from the spool, and the coil united with other components, including a terminal panel and housing which are also American-made. The completed article upon importation would be subject to the ad valorem rate of duty applicable to television parts upon the value of the yoke less the cost or value of the American-made wire, terminal panel and housing, assembled therein. The winding and cutting of the wire are either assembly steps or steps incidental to assembly.

Example 2. An aluminum electrolytic capacitor is assembled abroad from American-made aluminum foil, paper, tape, and Mylar film. In the foreign assembly plant the aluminum foil is trimmed to the desired width, cut to the desired length, interleaved with paper, which may or may not be cut to length or despoiled from a continuous length, and rolled into a cylinder wherein the foil and paper are cut and a section of sealing tape fastened to the surface to prevent these components from unwinding. Wire or other electric connectors are bonded at appropriate intervals to the aluminum foil of the cylinder which is then inserted into a metal can, and the ends closed with a protective washer. As imported, the capacitor is subject to the ad valorem rate of duty applicable to capacitors upon the value less the cost or value of the American-made foil, paper, tape, and Mylar film. The operations performed on these components are all either assembly steps or steps incidental to assembly.

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Example 3. The manufacture abroad of cloth on a loom using thread or yarn exported from the United States on spools, cops, or pirns is not considered an assembly but a weaving operation, and the thread or yarn does not qualify for the exemption. However, American-made thread used to sew buttons or garment components is qualified for the exemption because it is used in an operation involving the assembly of solid components.

(b) *Operations incidental to the assembly process.* Operations incidental to the assembly process whether performed before, during, or after assembly, do not constitute further fabrication, and will not preclude the application of the exemption. The following are examples of operations which are incidental to the assembly process:

- (1) Cleaning;
- (2) Removal of rust, grease, paint, or other preservative coating;
- (3) Application of paint or preservative coating, including preservative metallic coating, lubricants, or protective encapsulation;
- (4) Trimming, filing, or cutting off of small amounts of excess materials;
- (5) Adjustments in the shape or form of a component to the extent required by the assembly being performed abroad;
- (6) Cutting to length of wire, thread, tape, foil, and similar products exported in continuous length; separation by cutting of finished components, such as prestamped integrated circuit lead frames exported in multiple unit strips; and
- (7) Final calibration, testing, marking, sorting, pressing, and folding of assembled articles.

(c) *Operations not incidental to the assembly process.* Any significant process, operation, or treatment other than assembly whose primary purpose is the fabrication, completion, physical or chemical improvement of a component, or which is not related to the assembly process, whether or not it effects a substantial transformation of the article, will not be regarded as incidental to the assembly and will preclude the application of the exemption to such article. The following are examples of operations not considered incidental to the assembly as provided under sub-heading 9802.00.80, Harmonized Tariff